

FAITH.

O! ye of little faith! know ye not that there is a God in Heaven who has created you, and all things, for his own purposes? Why take ye thought for to-morrow? Know ye not that he careth for the lily of the field; and the hairs of your head are said to be numbered, and not one sparrow shall fall to the ground without his consent. Know ye not that from the dust and ashes of any mortal body, or man, he is able to raise up unto his glory a living monument; and also to cast down the mighty and strong of the earth in a moment, unexpectedly to him that is not constantly watchful and prayerful? Know ye not that he has appointed man to be a free agent, in so far as obeying the convictions of his conscience and understanding, and that he is both able and willing to guide and direct every soul the way to salvation, that may sincerely seek to find it. True it is that man is weak and feeble, and prone to give way to Satan, who would, if possible, deceive the very elect, the chosen of God, who need not fear that a hair of their heads shall be hurt if they prove faithful and true to their calling. But as the way is narrow and the pathway straight, many may not find it through their unbelief and their own arbitrary notions and promptings of the evil spirits contained in their hearts; nevertheless, he that will seek shall find, and he that trusteth to the Lord shall not perish, and sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. But since I am aware that all men have not all like talents, with regard to temporal or spiritual affairs, and vastly differ in opinion, in appearance, and circumstances; and although temporally subsist on the products of the same earth, breathe the same, temporally, and travel onward, approaching the same endless eternity, preparing themselves, in very different ways, to meet each separately, his own fate and judgment. It would appear as though they all were fitting themselves for different purposes, while on earth, to be executed in accordance with their several abilities. Each one, no doubt, estimating himself, and his co-operators, by no means the least beneficial to their Maker. And happy will every one be who will find it so, that his works will be an honor to him, his country, and his God. Not forgetting that it is an old saying—and it appears to be a true one—that it takes all kinds of people to make a world. And if this was really intended so by the Almighty—which does as yet not seem unlikely—then should we all be content with one another, and rejoice, each one in that calling which seems to be allotted to him and his class; as it does not seem unlikely that he will there be best content; consequently the least disturbance will be effected by being faithful and true-hearted, each in his own peculiar way, so long as the Almighty does not arouse him from dormant, sliding down the inclined plain of ruination and despair, as it were, to the bottomless pit of utter destruction and perdition.

Yea, never since I was born, did I see the people more alarmed, in this our happy land, than within the last few weeks—this being the 14th day of September, A. D. 1862. In my 37th year it occurred that an enrolment took place, apparently for the frightful purpose of drafting militia. An occurrence which had not taken place since 1812, if I am

not mistaken ; consequently, as mustering militia had for many years been abandoned, the muster rolls could not show how many men were likely to be subject to Draft within our noble State, in accordance with its own local laws. And a Draft appeared very likely to be needed, as our once noble and, comparatively speaking, peaceable country, at this time is in deadly war ; consequently about one month ago enrolments were being commenced, and the People and the Nation seemed to tremble for fear, with few exceptions. Few, however, seemed to understand the precise nature of the case ; but, as is evident, that by Providential care, the 6th Article of the 2nd Section of the Constitution of Pennsylvania, directs persons exempt from military duty, who conscientiously are scrupulous against bearing arms ; and by a law enacted for the purpose, they will be held liable to pay to the Commonwealth such sum as the Legislature may direct, "as equivalent for personal service." The Government, no doubt, trying to give every man enrolled an opportunity, gave him, or left at his residence, a printed notice, to appear before the Commissioner, for the purpose, if he claimed exemption from any cause, and have it determined.

Whereas, any one who was well informed on the nature of the case in general, needs no description ; and, of late, all who pay any attention to flying reports and rumors, are liable to being misinformed, it may not be best for me to enter into details extensively. But what many know, and have seen, and personally heard, would have been well compared to roaring lions and fleecy lambs having long dwelt together in peace and harmony in the same place, and rejoicing together in the same pursuit of happiness, until eventually the calm, soothing voice of the inoffensive, became almost extinct by the terrible growling, and howling and thundering in the land. I say not that all this lamentable calamity was brought upon us by the young lions, starving for the want of prey or nourishment. But, as the appearance indicated to many, the intercourse of the lamb with the lion produced a jealousy in the heart of the lioness, which, very naturally, would cause her offspring and descendants more angry and deceitful, taking upon themselves the resemblance of black lambs at a distance, who, upon approaching them, would change more and more distinguishable, under the title of peaceable or peace-professing wolves, so long as they had no opportunity to devour, though ravening at heart. While, on the other hand, the progenitors of the vessels of virtue, being decoyed off to commit adultery, in darkness, with the then apparently, equally qualified, feminines of vice, comparatively speaking. And even the most genuine moulds of virtue, who had been once begotten in holiness and purity, became debilitated by their improper use ; and while they were endeavoring to issue none but most pure and holy, it lay no more in their power, as they were surrounded by the enchanting fruits of amalgamation with the heroes of the earth. Notwithstanding there yet remained a few of those awkward and inconvinced, unnoticeable strange-looking and unconcerned peace-loving moulders and moulderies of virtue and harmony, who, by the way of kindness, would now and again show a little disposition of discontent, yet never allow any temptation to seduce them to commit bastardy, nor use violent means to avoid being compelled to do what they would not of their own free will, and in their own way, as it would appear ; yet a cloud of darkness or a heart-chilling wind seems to have filled the land,

so that either the good works of the meek and lowly have become almost invisible, or the hearts of the faithful combatants, who are willing to fight the good fight of faith, unarmed or weaponless, save the armor of faith, and the shield of righteousness and holiness, through atonement by the way and pattern laid down by the Lamb of God, must be but few, or severely chilled, so as to almost cease pulsation; otherwise though they be almost crushed by the power of darkness, they will soon heave forth peals of insurmountable glory, and a victory of Peace! much more honorable and reliable than any that may, can, or ever will be accomplished by the thunderlike threatenings and realities of the cannon.

Yet, understand me not that I mean to dictate to the rulers of our land, nor that I mean to bid them cease war upon those of their rebellious subjects, who would, in all probability, prove themselves roaring lions, seeking whom they might devour. But I mean to be understood by those of my brethren in faith, who are willing to cast their anchor with me, and with one another, on that Rock and that Truth which we have very recently been called upon to confess and acknowledge in unmistakable language, to the officials of our State, which was undoubtedly our duty, in accordance with our faith.

I well know that there are many in our midst who profess to be as good Christians as we are; yet as they say they would not make that confession, or as some say, take that oath. Well, what is that to me; if they are just as conscientious as any one, it is no harm to me. And if they have no scruples (which means a doubting or a hesitating) against bearing of arms in defence of their country, why then do many not boldly and promptly respond to the loud call of "To arms! to arms!" It would appear then their must be some other cause why they are not going. It is very likely, indeed. Can it be possible, then, that we have offended them by our honesty, in openly confessing that part of our faith. That can hardly be, if they hold the doctrine of Christ. It may be, however, that they had only forgotten themselves a little at the time, and will remember, or may already have remembered, when at prayer, in their own heart or closet, if not at the cock-crowing, after thrice denying. If any one, however, should thus be offended, who knows all my other points of faith and doctrine? I cannot help him. But should it be on account of not being familiar with me and my views on religion, I would cheerfully beg his pardon, and excuse myself by saying, that I have not, to my remembrance, refused to tell any one who, in a Christian manner, and in an apparent spirit of anxiety, made inquiry of me. But there are another kind of men who either may, or may not, profess to be Christians of any kind, whose veracity may be as little worthy of note as their foolish expressions and threatening, which on the one part are not true, and on the other cannot come to pass, so long as their is virtue in the land. Some say no married man could make the oath or affirmation required, to obtain an exemption from personal service without violating his marriage contract. Also, those that take the oath, swear away their citizenship, and had no more rights afterwards, and should not have, &c., &c. Entirely too vulgar and mean to record against them, for they know not what they do; and for the benefit of those who may not fully understand it, I will here insert the form of the testimony, affirmation or oath, as any one may please to call it, which I did affirm, and is precisely what was required of me to obtain my exemp-

tion from personal service—not one word, more or less, on affirmation :

“Do you sincerely and truly declare and affirm, depose and say, that you conscientiously scruple to bear arms, believing it unlawful to do so, whether in self defence, defence of your country, or otherwise however. That the scruples and belief before stated, have not been formed lightly, but carefully, deliberately and conscientiously; and are now declared and professed, not for the purpose of evading the military service of your country, but because you solemnly and religiously hold and maintain them, and in your conscience hold that it is your bounden duty to act in accordance with them, on all occasions and under all circumstances.”

So you affirm, or swear, at your option.

Ah! but that (say many) is not the oath I saw them take—“them Dutch.” They were swearing away their citizenship, their right to protect their property, their wives and children, &c., &c. Well, now, that would be astonishing, indeed. But who did this? Why them infernal broad-brim Dutch. I heard several say they would not shoot a man if he saw him in the act of ravishing his wife, or killing his family, or father and mother.

Well, be sure, may be he thought he would have nothing to shoot with, as he was conscientiously scrupulous against premeditatedly preparing any thing to fight with, save the sword of the Spirit of the Word of God.

“Well, can’t any body else read the Word of God?” Be sure. That is not the question. “Well, does it not stand in the Bible, as follows: ‘If the strong man of the house knew when the thief would come, he would prevent him.’” Be sure. I think not. “Are you so poorly informed, and dare say you are a Christian?” *Answer*: I do not remember of saying any thing about that; and I think it out of the question. “Well, is there nothing about ‘a strong man armed,’ &c., in Luke xi: 21?” I believe there is, but just exactly do not remember any thing about it. “Well, then, what about your conscientious scruples, if you do not know the Scriptures?” Well, well, it may be you can tell me the whole of it, if you please. A book being referred to, the 21st verse of the xi. chapter of Luke, reads thus: “When a strong man, armed, keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace.” Well, sure enough; but it does not say any thing about shooting. “I know that, but there are plenty of other places where it does.” O, yes, you are right about that; there is something about shooting, if I mistake not, in the ix. chapter and 8th verse of Jeremiah, that may suit to think of sometimes. “Ah! my good fellow, you need not try to get off in that way now, for you have not yet given any satisfactory answer on Luke xi: 21.” Sure enough; what is it you want to know about that? “Well, I would like you to tell me what you think it means.” Well, I think it means just exactly what it says. But if you read the following verse, viz: “But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.” You will find that it belongs to the 21st; and in order to get the real sense of it, it will be necessary to know the preceding, viz: “But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you,” showing that it was comparatively spoken, and not by the way of justification; most assuredly not, as the armors in which he trusted, was liable to fail. Apparently not for the want of skill or faith in it, as that is not referred to; but the strong in his case is referred to, showing that the armor failed; more especially as the finger of God is referred to

with regard to the stronger. "O, well, I do not understand you. But what do you make of it where it says: 'He that taketh the sword by the sword;' shall he perish?" *Answer*: I suppose you have reference to Jesus telling Peter to put up his sword, &c. "Well, what do I know about Scripture meaning, of Jesus telling Peter! But since I think of it, Did not Peter smite the high priest's servant's ear off, and had not Jesus told him to do so?" *Answer*: It seems the ear was cut off by Simon Peter. But it is not likely that Jesus had told him to do so, as would appear from John xviii: 10th and 11th verses. "Why then did he say—Luke xxii: 36th verse—'and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one?'" Sure, sure, that is something that looks a little strange. But if all men can't see into it, those who can should profit by it, and those who cannot should pray for grace and light on the subject, and probably the Lord will have mercy on them and save them. "See, see, is that the way you try to dodge the point? Do you not believe that it is right to use the sword?" Let it be right or wrong, that which is right, for one may be wrong for another, or vice versa, which may be readily inferred from viii. chapter, 1st Corinthians; also chap. x. Besides the very text you yourself was trying to quote in your behalf, with regard to him that taketh the sword, I will endeavor to explain. The only passage similar, familiar to me—*Mathew xxvi: 52*—Then said Jesus to him, (Peter,) put up again thy sword into his place, for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword; and the only explanation needed, in my estimation, if any man doubts the assertion, let him try it on by meeting a ferocious antagonist, and if he will not think of using it, and defend; where, by his love for his enemy must suffer, then I know not his disposition. And if he does not intend using it, but only for the purpose of frightening, yet will it be evident that he must have placed more confidence in it than the firm faith, that the features of *love* should be fully expressed and exhibited in all cases, the doing of which is not indicated by the ensign of a brandishing sword of steel. Furthermore, man, in his weakness, is so liable to lose sight of the narrow way, that, in the hour of threatening danger, it would frequently be much safer for mankind if carnal weapons had never been invented; though it may be useless to say any thing on that, as they have been, and the consequences must follow. Notwithstanding, they may be good in their place. I, for my part, have no skill in using them, and shall not so long as I shall prove faithful to the views which I now hold, and have held for a number of years. But how long it may be my privilege to enjoy the free rights of citizenship, and exercise my own judgment in regard to matters of state; or whether, in any case of exigency that may, or might befall me, is not for me to say. But it is my firm opinion, that the guidance of my God shall not likely call upon me to make use of arms, other than those with which I have been endowed by my Maker, otherwise I think he would have given me some inclination to correspond."

There, there, that will do; you are just like the rest of them. Not a bit better than an old woman.

Another speaker says: "They swore away their rights and their property. God d—n such men, they are not a bit better than the niggers on the hill. They ought not to be allowed to vote if they don't intend to fight."

Let that go for what it is worth, as it is best for a man not to cast pearls before the swine, lest they turn and rend him. Farewell, friend, be the mercy of our heavenly Father extended to you more fully. Farewell.

An apparently more refined speaker, apparently somewhat astonished at the scene at the time, said: "Well, sir, you have taken that oath, have you?"

One may say I have taken no oath, to my knowledge. I have conscientious scruples against swearing.

"You claimed your exemption, did you not?"

Yes.

"Did you get it?"

Yes.

"How so?"

By making my case known to the Commissioner.

"Didn't he swear you?"

No, he allowed me to affirm.

"Well, that is the same thing in law, is it not?"

I think not, else there would be no difference.

"The difference is but small, and I would not do either, as I claim the right of self defence, and owe my help to the Government, and have promised my wife and family nourishment and protection, and I think a man is no good citizen who will claim exemption these times, and say he will not raise arms in any case."

Answer. You may be exactly right in your own way, and for my part I claim the right of self defence, in my own way, and acknowledge my indebtedness to the Government, and have also promised my wife and family nourishment and protection in a Christian manner; and although I have claimed and obtained exemption from personal military service, I had no occasion to say that I would not raise arms. The question was: Had I conscientious scruples against bearing arms? And not whether I would, or would not, raise arms; for though a man was scrupulous against bearing of arms, premeditatedly, for the purpose of defence in any case, however, how can he know what he might or might not do, in a momentary impulse of excitement! Though a man prepare no weapon, other than the Holy Ghost, or the Sword of the Spirit of love toward all mankind, and that genuine, though he builds his whole hope and faith in God and his appointed agencies, expecting never to be so situated as to feel himself called upon, personally, to offer carnal resistance. I will not say it might befall him to be his lot some time or other; but if so, it is my firm opinion that he whose duty it will be, after first having made use of all calm, and lamb-like, available means, will be providentially, almost if not supernaturally, furnished with all necessary armor. And so far as good citizenship is concerned, I do not wish to be boisterous, nor offensive, and do not claim any office at all, nor the right to any that cannot be filled without execution of corporeal punishment, though I despise them not. But it is my opinion, that though a man never gave his country one minute's military services personally, he may yet, nevertheless, be a good and substantial citizen, and should, from that cause, not be curtailed or deprived of any rights of citizenship, suffrage, and elective franchise. Otherwise, I fear there would be few to have the ruling power, unless almost perpetual war.

"You seem to make that which some think such an abominable oath, rather a high thing, compared with the views of other wise men."

Know you not that it is said : If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye would be able to remove mountains. Also one who hath said : My yoke is easy and my burden is light. Mathew xi : 30 ; Know ye him.

"Your preaching may do well enough in times of peace, but these are war times ; and it may be that you did not take the oath that some did. But the way I was told some swore, was prodigious ; and I would not like to be in their hides."

Well, I suppose not, for I am sure I have heard some terrible threatening, in connection with some terrible swearing, and I presume you are a more moral man than to be willing to exchange with them. But if you have reference to the affidavits or affirmations legally taken, with regard to consciencious scruples, they were all alike, and are recorded alike for all, with the difference of sworn or affirmed.

"I have been reliably told that the Commissioner did ask many questions not embodied in the form you have asserted."

Well, what I have asserted, is precisely what I believe, that all who did affirm were asked while on affirmation. As an evidence, I will here insert the form, which was signed by the Commissioner :

STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA, LANCASTER Co., SS.

Before me, Commissioner, to superintend Drafting for said County, personally appeared (name of person and township filled in) who being duly (affirmed or sworn filled in) did depose and say, that he conscienciously scruples to bear arms, believing it unlawful to do so, whether in self defence or in defence of his country, or otherwise however. That the scruples and belief, above stated, have not been formed light, but carefully, and deliberately, and conscienciously, and are now declared and professed, not for the purpose of evading the military service of his country in the present exigency, but because he solemnly and religiously holds and maintains them, and in his conscience believes that it is his bounden duty to act in accordance with them, on all occasions and under all circumstances.

[Signed by Commissioner.]

An acknowledgment of the testimony, signed by the person exempted.

Upon finding and understanding the above requirements to be all, I immediately felt that it was nothing hard for me, as I have been bred and born and instructed from childhood to even more stringent discipline, and can safely say, have lived all my days without materially violating even that ; consequently, it would seem a small matter for me to openly confess so small a portion of my faith.

"But how is it, I have been told you did not belong to any religious society. And I have been also informed, that the law was only intended for members of a few of the non-resistant Societies, such as Quakers, Mennonites, Ammish, &c."

As to the intention of the law, I think it is no respecter of Societies or of persons, in that respect ; nor do I think that it should be. But if I understand the nature of the case, so far as the law is concerned, it allows every man an equal opportunity to have consciencious scruples, &c. And if upon examination it is found, or the contrary, not found, whether exclusively or inclusively, or not being a member of any special Society, he has, and should have, the inalienable right of elective franchise, which means power of choosing exemption from any odious or burthensome duty.

“But it does not seem to be a fair shake that some should go and run the risk of being killed on the field of battle, while bravely defending the lives, liberty, and pursuit of happiness of others of their fellow men, who, by the mere paying of an equivalent to the Commonwealth, have the privilege to stay at home with their wives and children, while at the same time those who are poor, and not able to pay the equivalent, will be taken forthwith, as it were, to the battle-field, and slaughtered by thousands.”

Perhaps you are a little in the dark as to this paying of an equivalent. A man is not required at the time of his exemption, immediately to pay, or give any obligations or security, to pay any thing; nor required to promise any thing at all—but notified that he is exempt from personal service, and held liable for an equivalent, &c. Now if a man was pre-disposed not to be a good citizen, there was plenty of opportunity for him to waste and ruin all his property. Also to accumulate nothing, and drink and frolic so excessively, and abuse himself so severely, either by accumulating, or in the act of disrespectfully and disgracefully scattering wealth, or in pursuits of pleasure, &c., so to unfit himself for military service as to come off clear without equivalent or personal service, &c., of any act. And if men were ever so disposed to be good citizens, and by some unavoidable mishap became debilitated, either to give equivalent or personal service, they have the same opportunity of being conscientiously scrupulous, &c., being exempt without paying any thing except poll tax, and still retain and enjoy all the privileges of the laws, and rights, and pursuit of happiness, although they had been a great portion of their time on public expense, as in the County house, &c. As even the most noble-hearted and persevering economist, who, at the same time, he is most likely to be conscientiously scrupulous, is none the less likely to be paying a very heavy share of tax on debts for property and benevolent acts, besides his military equivalent, with a cheerful heart, if possible. As it is intended more to strengthen the Government, than if he with his scruples on his mind, and neuralgic body, unnoticed by the surgeon, had went to the battle field there to die, and leave his ripening crops, or his fallow fields, or as the case may be, in the charge of those who, from old age or dissipated habits, or otherwise, have become disabled, or cannot be depended upon from numerous causes, to prevent starvation and extreme poverty, as that would be a natural consequence if all able-bodied men would go into service and be maimed, lamed, and two-fold blinded, if not to leave a widow, very probably themselves as a subject of charity. But with regard to the fairness of the shake, I have nothing to say. Provided the “elective franchise” be fully and individually recognized, as then all who feel like being oppressed without having an opportunity of cooling their vengeance, or trying their skill in the discipline of war. And all who think it the only way of becoming distinguished and honored; or all who feel alarmed past controlling their temper; and all who may feel themselves in the service of the god of war, should of course have an opportunity of displaying their skill, &c., whenever their is any occasion for the want of their service in that way, and approved of by the Government. But, in my opinion, peaceable people, who do not feel called upon by their God, should not be compelled, as that would destroy the “elective franchise.”